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He turned his head and saw a figure standing in the door of the Cone that caused him to start with surprise.

HAWKEYE HARRY, THE YOUNG TRAPPER RANGER.

BY OLL COOMES.

Author of "Frank Bell, the Boy Spy," "Shooting Star, the Boy Chief," etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

Alas! deluded chief! Half a decade was to come the total extinction of his tribe!

"Then let the white warrior and Red Wing smoke the pipe of peace," said the chief, producing a highly-ornamented calumet filled with tobacco.

They smoked the pipe of peace and acknowledged each other friends. Peace between the Fox Indians and the whites was declared, and it was for this purpose that the chief had come to the Cone.

Presently the chief went to the door of the hut and uttered a shrill chirrup.

Forth from behind the rocks and bushes, like phantoms, glided a hundred Indian warriors, painted for the war-path.

Old Optic experienced a slight shudder at sight of them, but he permitted no look to betray the least mistrust. His confidence in Red Wing had been so firmly settled by acts of kindness and words of truth, that he felt no hesitation in accepting him as a friend. But, in general, he knew it was the nature of an Indian to be treacherous, and in that band of a hundred he felt satisfied there were those unpossessed of the good traits of their chief.

Red Wing gathered his warriors around the Cone, and made known to them the treaty of peace that had just been consummated. Then followed the ceremony of burying the hatchet, and after this had been performed, most of the warriors left the valley, but shortly before night they returned, bearing with them, upon ponies, their women and children, and a promiscuous mass of luggage—all their earthly possessions.

Before the sun had gone down, an Indian encampment had been pitched in the valley, and the shouts of children and barking of dogs were echoing through the forest aisles.

Darkness came, but Hawkeye Harry did not. Old Optic felt somewhat uneasy about him.

Guards were posted in the defile leading into the valley, and along the bluff overlooking the camp.

The night wore away and a new day dawned, which was spent by the warriors in supplying the encampment with game for food, while Old Optic and the chief sat in consultation.

Night again threw its shadows over the forest and plain. Still Hawkeye Harry had not come.

Alone, by a small fire that burned in the center of the Cone, sat Old Optic gazing reflectively into its warm glow. He felt sorely uneasy about his young friend, Hawkeye Harry. On the morrow he resolved to make some search for him.

Then a soft footstep sounded behind him.

He turned his head and saw a figure standing in the door of the Cone that caused him to start with surprise.

Night again threw its shadows over the forest and plain. Still Hawkeye Harry had not come.

A groan came up from the trapper's heart.

"You would answer," continued the stranger, "that another won the affections of my wife, and together they fled from the Highlands to parts unknown, carrying my darling little Gertie with them. Broken-hearted, disgraced, I fled to the wilderness to forget my shame and sorrow amid its constant dangers."

"Yes, yes!" returned Old Optic, excitedly.

"What is that what my answer would have been?"

"And have you never heard of that unhappy wife since she left you?" asked the stranger.

"Never!" returned Optic, with the bitterness of despair.

"Nor your child—your little Gertie?"

"No."

"How old was she when you last saw her—the child?"

"She was in her ninth year."

"And how long since you last saw her?"

"Seven long, bitter years."

"Do you think you would know her if you were to see her now?"

The old trapper's face grew brighter. A ray of hope beamed in his eyes.

"Yes, I would know her. Her face could

never have changed in seven years beyond a father's recognition, for it has ever been before me."

"And again: would you believe me were I to tell you where to find your daughter?"

"Again Old Optic started, though a light of joy and hope shone in his eyes.

"You seem to know my past so well that I could not believe otherwise," he replied.

"She is the adopted daughter of the Sioux chief, Black Buffalo."

"Great Heaven! is this the truth, stranger?" gasped the old trapper.

"It is the solemn truth."

"Then to-morrow's day will find me on the way to the Sioux village. Gertie, my lost darling, shall be rescued. God willing!"

"Then I will go hence," said the masked stranger, turning toward the door of the Cone.

"Stay! stay, stranger!" cried the trapper.

"Let me reward you for this service—this information! You said you had come for aid: name your desire, and if within my power, it shall be granted."

"My troubles are the same as yours. In

the hands of the Sioux I have a captive

child—a daughter—and I came to seek your aid to rescue her."

"Then stay, and together we will start in

search of our children to-morrow. I will

obtain the assistance of Red Wing and his warriors, who are friends to the whites. We will march on the Sioux village, and if we can not effect the rescue of our children by ransom or stratagem, we can do it by force, for most of the Sioux are away on the war-path now."

"Then I will come back in the morning and accompany you," said the stranger.

"But why not remain now?" asked Old Optic.

"I can not."

"Then one question more: why are you here in disguise, and who are you?"

"I am a curious person, friend trapper, and shall insist, as a favor, on not being questioned in regard to my disguise, which I shall continue to wear during our journey to the Sioux village and until after my child has been rescued. I have good reasons for this secrecy, as you shall know some time, perhaps. As to my name, call me Clodded Heart. That will answer well—better than my real name. I'll come to-morrow morning; till then, adieu."

The masked stranger turned and glided from the Cone, leaving the old trapper alone with his thoughts.

Suddenly he was aroused by a footstep behind him.

He turned quickly, hoping to encounter the form of his beloved young companion, Hawkeye Harry.

But he was disappointed. It was Red Wing, the Fox chief.

"Ah, 'tis you, chief," he said. "I have had a strange visitor to-night. But, come, sit you down. I have a proposition to make to you—a proposition which is to be spiced with Sioux scalps, and many beautiful presents."

A grim smile flitted over the stoical features of the chief, as he seated himself before the old trapper.

"It is the solemn truth."

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the hands of the Sioux I have a captive

child—a daughter—and I came to seek your aid to rescue her."

"Then stay, and together we will start in

search of our children to-morrow. I will

not be separated from her again."

"HAWKEYE HARRY's emotions became ter-

rible as he gazed down into the pale, up-

turned face of Nore Gardette, and saw the

red tide of life flowing from the wound

which his own hands had inflicted.

Her eyes were closed, the long, drooping

lashes resting upon the pale cheeks. The

lips stood slightly apart, revealing the white,

pearly teeth; and the little hands lay limp

and lifeless at her side. An expression of

pain had settled upon the lovely face, whose

contour was as delicately defined as though

it had been chiseled from Purian marble.

The young ranger sat like one in a trance.

He was lost in thought, and did not hear

the steps of his friend approaching him.

"Hawkeye Harry, you are a good man,

but you are a fool to let her die like this.

"I am a fool, but I am not a murderer."

"I am sorry for you, but you are a fool."

"I am a fool, but I am not a murderer."

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—as motionless as the form that lay in his arm.

Slowly he regained his presence of mind; then he turned his attention to the maiden's wound. A cry of joy escaped his lips when he saw that which had been noticed it before; would have saved him a terrible pang of agony. The wound was not a deep one; the skull was not injured, the bullet having cut through the beautiful hair and plowed a furrow through the scalp behind. This Harry saw at a glance, and the low sigh and a slight motion of the body soon told him that his surmises were true.

"Thank God! she lives!" he cried. Then dipping some water in the palm of his hand, he began laving her brow.

The maiden stirred slightly, and, opening her eyes, gazed in bewilderment around, then closed them again.

The young man continued the application of water to the brow, and poured a few drops beneath her pearly teeth.

In a few minutes she opened her eyes again and attempted to rise. But her head sunk back upon the throbbing breast of the young ranger.

"Rest easy, Miss Nora," he breathed in her ear; "you are safe, and, thank God, not maimed nor badly injured."

She started with a little sigh, and gazed around her as if trying to recall her situation. Then she raised her eyes, and gazing up into the face of her companion, demanded:

"Where am I?"

Hawkeye Harry told her.

"Then you rescued me from the Indians," she said.

"Yes; and I came near taking your life. It was I that shot you!"

"You!" cried the maiden.

"Yes; I thought it was the Indian who was wrapped in the robe, and you in the red shawl."

A faint smile played about the lips of the maiden as she replied:

"The savage took a fancy to the red shawl, and, taking it from me, donned it himself and put his robe around me. But, oh, how my head pains me!"

Nora took from her pocket a linen handkerchief, which the youth carefully bound around her head, so as to staunch the flow of blood.

He then arose to his feet and was about to step ashore, when his ear suddenly caught the crash of hoofed feet approaching through the woods from the south.

"I'm afraid we're in danger, Nora," he said, as he sprang ashore. "We will have to cross in the canoe to the opposite side of the river, and conceal ourselves in the woods."

Removing the bridle from his horse, he turned it loose. The trained beast had already detected the approaching danger, and sniffed the air. His master led him to the water's edge, and, by command, he plunged into the river, and swimming to the opposite shore, dashed away into the woods.

Re-entering the canoe, Hawkeye Harry took up the paddle and headed the craft toward the other bank.

A rod or two above the point where the horse had reached the opposite shore, a small bayou put into the river. It was as many as three rods wide, and quite deep. Along its edges grew a fringe of reeds and water-willows, extending quite a rod out into the deepest water on either side, thus leaving a channel up the center that was unobstructed.

Hawkeye Harry saw at once what an admirable retreat the bayou offered, so up it he ran his canoe several rods, then turned at right-angles and pushed in toward the east shore. Leaning over the prow of the canoe, he carefully parted the reeds and branches overhead, as he drew the little craft through the opening thus made, taking great care that not a single blade was broken, or left in an unnatural position.

After he had pulled his canoe well in among the reeds, he entered a small opening just large enough for the canoe to rest in without touching the water-stalks. Above, the long, dagger-like blades drooped over from all sides, forming a beautiful archway or covering over them.

In this little arbor the youth permitted the canoe to rest. He concluded to wait here until he learned what dangers menaced them before advancing further.

They had been in this retreat but a few minutes when they heard voices. Peering out through the network of green, Harry saw a large party of mounted Sioux Indians, standing upon the bank in eager contemplation.

It was Black Buffalo and his band, and in their midst was the prisoner, bound and认识. He was an Indian, and Harry recognized him at once as the cowardly Sac—Nora's late captor.

Keeping a steady eye upon their movements, the youth saw some of them dismount and search the ground closely. He then saw them gather in a knot near the place where the youth's horse had entered the river, and point and gesticulate in a significant manner.

In a few minutes half a dozen warriors sprang into the river and swam to the opposite shore. They searched the bank until they found where the horse had crossed. But whether they knew that the horse had not a burden upon his back and a hand to guide him, of course Harry knew not, but that they suspected something of the truth was evident, for they did not follow up the horse's trail.

Another consultation was now held, which ended in their all dismounting and making such arrangements as convinced the young ranger that they were going into a temporary encampment.

This caused him no little uneasiness. Had he been alone, he would not have cared; but when he gazed upon the little form nestled at his side, and saw her sweet, pretty face and dark eyes upturned to his confidingly—resting with an apparent sense of security under his strong arm—it was an appeal that his manhood could not regard too highly.

With a steady eye he watched the redskins. He soon saw a number of the savages depart down the stream and some up the stream. What this movement indicated he was unable to tell, but, in the course of an hour, he saw two canoes coming up the stream, and still, a few minutes later, he saw another coming down. Then he knew it was the canoes that the redskins had gone in search of; and his fears were at once aroused, for he knew what might be expected now.

Several minutes he watched the Indians;

then turning his gaze upon Nora, he said:

"We are now in great danger, Nora, yet by extreme caution we may elude our enemies. It'll require a keen pair of eyes to see us in this spot, but the savages all have keen eyes and ears; and should one come near, do not utter a word, nor move, even if he discovers us. And prepare yourself to witness dark deeds—such as may cause your soul to revolt with terror, for I shall fight to the last to save you—Ah!"

The light dip of an ear caught his ear, and called forth the exclamation. On peering through the foliage he saw a savage in a canoe skirting along the reeds.

"What is it, Hawkeye?" asked the maiden.

"An Indian coming this way, and I expect he's looking for our trail. But, let him come," and the youth took his side tomahawk and laid it at his feet.

"Oh, Hawkeye!" said the maiden, in a tone that showed how great was her reliance on the youth, "you are a brave and noble man, and are running many risks for me. But, my father will reward you well for all your kindness to me."

Hawkeye Harry smiled as he gazed down into the sweet young face of the maiden. The blood leaped in strong currents through his veins. Her gentle words had added a new power to the passion of love that was growing within his breast. In a moment of impetuosity he replied:

"The boon that my heart already craves for my services in your behalf, Nora, is priceless; and none but you, and you alone, could bestow it upon me. Yet, it's not likely that a young girl like you would bestow such a gift upon a rough, uneducated tramp like me."

Involuntarily the maiden raised her eyes until they met those of her companion. She half suspected what he was aiming at, and a faint blush suffused her face. To Harry it spoke plainer than words, but her lips, tremulous with emotion, opened, and she asked:

"What is that gift, Harry?"

"Your love!"

The face of the maiden flushed crimson, and the long, dark lashes drooped slyly. Hawkeye Harry saw her lips quiver with some deep, inward emotion, then open to speak. The youth's heart ceased its wild flutter. It was an eventful moment to him, but before the first word had escaped Nora's lips, they were startled by a noise in the dry reeds—a quick noise, resembling the "t-wash" of a scythe through the bearded grain.

Harry glanced quickly around and saw the Indian, before-mentioned, in the canoe, moving along the edge of the reeds, and ever and anon thrusting a long lance into the stalks, as though feeling for a hidden enemy. It was this that produced that peculiar sound that prevented Nora's reply.

Harry watched the Indian closely, and, as he saw him approach, nearer and nearer, he felt no little uneasiness through the red-skin might thrust his lance into their covert.

As a shield to her, in case he did, the youth quickly and silently interposed his body between the maiden and the Indian. In this he was not a moment too soon.

There came a sudden *thash* through the reeds; there was a vivid flash before Harry's eyes; then he felt a sharp, stinging sensation upon his cheek. He could scarcely restrain an exclamation, for it was the point of the Indian's lance that had just touched his face and punctured the skin. A little jet of blood spurted from the wound, but, with great presence of mind, the youth kept quiet and watched the movements of the Indian, whose body was partially visible.

At the same time, he was satisfied that he and Nora could not be seen in the shadows of the dense growth around him. Was it possible that his sense of feeling was so sensitive as to have felt the touch of the weapon upon the young man's cheek? Why does he stare so at the point of the lance?—why does he start?

Alas! his keen eyes detect something upon the polished weapon—*blood!*—that told of the presence of a living creature within the reeds!

The situation had indeed become critical.

The savage laid his lance down, and rising to his feet, peered with brows contracted, into the dense forest of stalks and overhanging verdure. But, Harry was satisfied that his gaze did not penetrate their covert—of this he was soon convinced. The red-skin did not seem satisfied with his ocular search, for, turning the prow of the canoe, he reached forward, and parting the reeds, began drawing the craft in among them in the same manner that he had entered the thicket.

The young trapper felt his blood run cold, for he now saw that discovery was unavoidable. But, he prepared himself for the worst.

"Nora," he said, in a whisper to the maiden, "an Indian is approaching us, and our safety depends much on silence. Turn your eyes if you would not witness a bloody deed."

As he concluded, the youth grasped the handle of his tomahawk, ready for action.

Nora, shuddering, turned her head and buried her face in her hands.

Slowly the savage approached—so silently that he created not a sound.

Within half an arm's length of our friends' canoe, the Indian's came to a stand.

Then, with tomahawk in hand, he leaned slightly forward and peered into the little arbor.

Hawkeye Harry saw the pupils of his black, scintillating eyes dilate with intense gazing, and knew that he was waiting for them to become accustomed to the shadows of the covert. He could see the veins standing out upon his naked arms and breast, and the workings and twitching of the facial muscles—all engendered by fear, uncertainty and expectancy.

Thus they remained for a moment; then the eyes of Hawkeye Harry and the savage met in an unflinching and deadly gaze.

Not a word nor a sound escaped the lips of either. But, together their murderous tomahawks rose; together they fell!

"CHAPTER X.

—HENRI ROCHE OUTWITTED.

"ROCHE! Henri Roche, in the name of God come here!"

Had a voice called to Henri Roche from the grave he would not have started with more violence than when this voice fell upon his ears.

He gazed around him, his lips quivering with fear and his face ghastly white.

Half sitting and half reclining against a rock upon a little grassy plot near the edge of the creek, the outlaw chief saw the figure of a woman, dressed in faded garments, half-civilized and half-savage.

If her voice had startled him with fear, then the sight of her face paralyzed him with terror; and, like one in a stupor, he stood and gazed upon the reclining form that stared at him with the stony, icy look of a corpse.

The face was that of a woman. Her form and face were wasted away to emaciation, yet her haggard features and large, mournful eyes were the relics of a once beautiful woman.

She might have been forty, and she might have been fifty years of age. There were a few threads of silver among her raven-black tresses of hair. Her whole being showed the indeible stamp of the destroying hand of trouble and sorrow.

Why should Henri Roche stare at a poor, helpless woman, his teeth chattering with fear?

"Come nearer to me—come nearer, Henri Roche," the woman called, seeing he did not move. "Come; you need not fear me. I am dying—dying—the victim of your human treachery and wickedness."

Henri Roche breathed easier. Though the voice and face of the woman had terrified him, he felt easier when she said she was dying, for her looks confirmed her words. His courage revived; he did not fear a dying woman, and advancing, he stepped near her and gazed down into the pale, upturned face.

It was then that he experienced that feeling of terrible and solemn awe that we all experience when we stand by the death-bed and gaze down upon the cold, clammy features of the dying—a feeling which never fails in its appeals to the hardest heart.

There was a settled expression upon the woman's thin face. Her thin nostrils were dilated and purple. Her lips were bloodless and drawn tightly over the pearly teeth; and the eyes—oh, who can paint the expression of the eyes of one standing upon life's brink, and fixed with a gaze, looking beyond the grave into a new transfiguration?

"Henri Roche."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Roche, "is this true? Is it possible that I find you dying thus, Cecil Gray?"

"Yes, it is possible," replied the woman, faintly.

"How come you—"

"I came to seek you, Henri Roche," she broke in, "and heaven has at last brought us face to face. Roche, you are the author of all my misery and sorrow."

"Nay, nay, Cecil Gray," replied Roche, "you spurned my love. Then I told you I would have revenge, and I kept my word. I swore Willis Gray should never live with you, nor you with him, as man and wife. You knew the hot, revengeful blood of a Spaniard coursed my veins, and should not have crossed me."

"But, Roche, I did not love you."

"Nor did you love Gray. It was his wealth you married. This provoked me worse than all, and when I saw you lavishing your affections on your first-born—the child of Willis Gray—then I resolved to bleed your fickle heart by stealing that child and hiding it away where you would never find it. I did so, more. I separated you and Gray! Mine, Cecil, has been a glorious revenge!"

"Yes, yes; I admit it has, Roche," returned the woman, with a wild, stony gaze that caused him to shudder; "I can suffer a little while longer, but let me die content, happy, Roche."

"If I can do any thing to soothe your mind, now that you are dying, I will do so gladly."

"You can, by telling me if my child lives, and if so, where she is."

A grim, triumphant smile overspread the face of the outlaw, as he replied:

"I am glad, Cecil, that in your last moments I can give you this information. But, had you lived twenty years longer, I would never have done so—no, never!"

"Oh, Henri Roche! the vengeance of Heaven will fall as heavily upon your soul as your vengeance has fallen upon my heart. But tell me, Roche, is my child alive?"

"She is."

"Thank God! Where is she?"

"I fear that information will brighten your last moments but little, Cecil."

"It is my dying request—pray tell me?" she panted; with her thin, emaciated hands outstretched imploringly.

"She is," said Roche, "in the Sioux village. She is the adopted daughter of Black Buffalo, the chief. She has grown to womanhood, and is very beautiful, and when I reach the village again, she will become the wife of him her mother rejected."

A groan escaped the woman's lips, and a fire of deadly vengeance flashed in her dark, sunken eyes, as she replied:

"Hercules, harm one hair of her head and Heaven's wrath will fall upon you!"

The heartless outlaw smiled mockingly, then replied:

"You should not let such bitter words fall from your lips, Cecil, when you are so soon to be summoned before the judgment bar. Let us talk more rationally now, forget the past, and—"

"Never! Go! leave me, heartless villain!" the woman cried. "Go! your presence is hateful."

Roche turned, like one walking in his sleep, and moved away in deep thought. This interview had terribly agitated him, and when a dozen steps away, something forced him to stop, turn, and gaze back.

He started as he did so, with a low cry of sudden fear.

He saw that he had been terribly deceived—outwitted. He beheld the supposed dying woman standing erect, and holding, leveled at his heart, a small gleaming rifle, along whose barrel he caught the steady and deadly glow of her dark eye.

Quick as thought the villain stepped aside. The rifle cracked, and the bullet sped harmlessly by him.

"Ha! ha! Cecil!" laughed the villain;

"your aim is like your deathbed—false, untrue—a deception. Cunningly you wormed from me the secret of your child, but little good it will do you. You shall dog my footsteps no longer—you shall die in earnest. You made a demon of me, and so I care not for human life."

The villain jerked his rifle to his shoulder and leveled it upon the woman.

Fear seemed to take possession of the

any further in his oath of the bullet-scar? Hercules, Lu and myself came to Chicago to carry out our plans. We all had hurts to mend, and vows to keep; for the same two men who assisted Delia Rivers in her outrage upon me, had attempted Lu's life shortly after she arrived in New Orleans, believing her to have money hid away.

It was then that Hercules made known to me the part he had played at the death of the Quadroon. I believed his story, believed him innocent—do believe so still. He said, though he was so much older than I, he would be a brother to me. And he has kept his word. A brother could not be more kind than he has been, even if he is, at times, rather blunt spoken.

"On coming to Chicago, I assumed the role of a fortune-teller. Lu sought a home to herself, with the child Carl in her care, intending, at an early date, when we had arranged matters thoroughly, to expose the impostors. To carry out my vow of hate against Delia Rivers, I saw that I had but to destroy Carl Grand's love for her, and he would sacrifice her in his oath of vengeance. I laid my plans accordingly, and soon had the satisfaction of trapping my game. By mystifications and delusive speeches, I won his love. He would gladly wed me, to-morrow, if I were to consent, although he has never seen my face. Delia Rivers, therefore, will die!"

"Lu, the negress, in reply to questions I put to her, said she had seen a roll of MS., tied with a black ribbon, sealed with a black seal; had seen Delia Rivers place it carefully away in an old desk that was in the house; and I resolved that Carl Grand should be the means of giving me back my inheritance.

"But, I like to have forgotten: Trix, my brother, never saw me, from the time John Lisle started to hunt down his enemies, until I returned to Chicago. We had not been here when he came to my house, seeking employment. I recognized him, but, for cogent reasons, did not let him know it. Hercules, also, knew who it was. He was a miserable, half-starved boy, and this prevailed upon me, besides the fact of his relationship, to take him in. I never treated him as a servant, and he must have noticed it. But, after what has transpired to-night—much that you have not seen—I believe that Trix was sent by his grandmother, Lala, to destroy Hercules—having impressed it upon his mind that the Hunchback was the true murderer of the Quadroon."

Zone paused at this point, as if her narrative was concluded.

"Is there no more?" inquired Gascon, with quick warmth.

"There may be much more; but I have told you all I can. Do you believe now that—no, stop; there is more that I can tell. Hercules was recently in the employ of Carl Grand."

"Yes, I remember his being there when I arrived."

"The false Herminie had asked Carl Grand what had caused the sudden decease of her father and mother. In reply he informed her that their uncle—*y-u*—had poisoned them."

"God! what a wretch!"

"He further said that he had sworn, by the scar in the palm of his hand, to have your life. You were coming to his house soon, and he called upon her, in the name of the dead, to assist. She, fully his equal in wickedness, readily acquiesced; for she saw that this would increase their wealth. By skilful management on the part of Hercules, you have been saved, to confound them."

"And I will!" he interrupted, vehemently.

"Once let me get strong again, and I will be only too eager to crush the vipers that have been stinging at my life, and usurping the heridom of Greville. But, tell me, how did Hercules get into the employ of this murderous scoundrel?"

Whatever reply Zone would have made it was stayed by the opening of the door, and one of the women of the house said:

"Here's a gentleman who says he must see you."

Zone uttered a cry. Mortimer Gascon gazed in astonishment.

The unexpected visitor was Evard Greville—the owner of the pale face that had appeared at the library window of the large house near Union Park.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STRANGE CURE

So sudden and systematic was the delivery of the blow which felled the Hunchback—well calculated, sped with all the force of hate, by an arm nerved to its greatest strength—that the victim was partially stunned, completely surprised, a close prisoner within the passage of a few seconds.

Little Carl slipped from his arms, and fell heavily. But the child made no sound; remaining quietly prostrate till he should be spoken to—till he knew that they were in trouble, readily perceiving that the occupants of the house were their enemies—and he waited, listening, half fearing that the terrible stroke had killed his protector.

In the center of the ceiling of the room which was now the Hunchback's prison, was a small skylight, through which a dim, uncertain glimmer, caused by the conflagration, quivered and broke the thick murkiness of surrounding objects.

At one side was a fire-place. The top of this fire-place, inside, was firmly shut with an arch of brick; but, on that side next to the room in which the maniac was confined, there was an exit, cunningly contrived—and by this means, Lala had disappeared; crying out the significant words from between the walls, which struck like a knell into the ears of her enemy.

Lala emerged from the fire-place into Herminie's presence.

The maniac was sitting upon the floor, with her head bowed, swaying gently as she worked and twisted her fingers through her long, disheveled hair.

"She does not see me," thought the Indian woman, as she gilded, swift and noiseless, across the apartment.

Jose was on the outside, prompt in carrying out the plan that was understood between them.

She glanced at Herminie—then gave one quick, loud knock on the door.

"Lala?"

"Yes. Hurry."

In another moment she was out of the room, and Jose relocked the door. But the maniac had seen her. No sooner was she gone than Herminie started up; and while her strangely brilliant eyes lighted with a peculiar sparkle, and an unreadable expression dwelt in her disfigured, blood-stained face, she glanced alternately toward the door and the fire-place; then advanced to

the latter on tiptoe, examining it curiously.

"That queer woman again!" she said to herself. "Who can she be? So ugly, too! Here—she came out of here, I saw her. That's funny—the place hasn't any hole in it—no. I wonder how she did it?"

She continued thus, all the while looking and fingering about the interior of the chimney.

Miguel had joined his captain when Lala came out, having assured himself that the Hunchback was safely caged.

She frowned on the bulky Spaniard, as she caught Jose by the arm and half dragged him back to the medicine room.

"Fool! you have left my lotion to burn!" she exclaimed. "Back with you! and stir it quickly, or the captain will die!"

"Cospita! he must not die!" cried Miguel, as he returned in haste to the pan.

And he was just in time. Another second of neglect, and the stuff would have been ruined.

"Smell this," he muttered, vigorously twirling the ladle round and round. "I am sick with it. Captain, this is a foul liquid of poison!"

"Mind your duty, there, and talk less," snapped the woman.

"Eurgh! Can I do more than I am?" sharp and savage.

"He is safe—safe," said Lala to Jose, as she made the latter lie down again on the bed.

The exertion had cost him dear, for he was now too weak to reply. She saw this; and when she had fixed him comfortably, she turned her attention to the steaming pan.

"It is done. You may leave off."

Miguel was glad to retire. He went to the bedside of his captain, and while he still regarded Lala covertly, he whispered:

"Are you sure that tiger is safe? If he should get out, he will claw us to pieces in a minute—"

"Cease your gabble!" commanded Lala, who overheard him. "He can not talk—do you not see it? Wait till I have done with him."

"You are an old snarl—dragon!" growled Miguel.

"Peace."

She prepared a large, thick plaster, or poultice, and soon had it applied to the wound. Next she held a small vial beneath the nose of her patient with one hand, while, with the other, she occasionally wet his lips with the contents of a second vial.

Impressed by Miguel's hold his hands tightly.

A perceptible effect was soon produced. The plaster acted on the wound; the inhalation and swelling threw him into a dozing, drowsy state; and Lala gravely watched the progress of the cure.

"Hist!" said Miguel, "his hands are hot as coals. As I live, he will burn up!"

"Silence! Hold tight."

"But, there are sparks here, too! The devil!—this man is a battery; for I am trembling; and ticklish quirks are going through me!"

Suddenly the patient's arms contracted, with a jerk, and it was so unexpected that Miguel nearly let go.

"Hold tight. Straighten them out—rub—ordered Lala.

He was mystified, and obeyed in silence.

The fever relaxed at a rapid rate; and the Indian woman soon nodded her head with satisfaction, as Jose seemed to fall into an easy, refreshing sleep.

She motioned him away; and they stood off, looking at the still form.

"Let him slumber—it works well. All is right."

"How long?" questioned the Spaniard, under his breath.

"Not many minutes."

"Are you sure of that?"

"How? Am I a charlatan? Hold your tongue, or you will make trouble for yourself."

"I do not like the looks of this," persisted Miguel, dubiously.

"Of what? whom?"

"The captain. See—he is white as death."

"He is not dead, though; nor will he die. Fear nothing."

"Look now; if he should die—by the tooth of Satan! I'll have your life!"

Cut short by a movement on the part of the woman, who made a quick step toward him, raising her claw-like hands, as if to scratch and uttering a sound like the purr-growl and spit of a cat.

"Now be still," she said, chuckling.

"I could strangle you!" he hissed, while he rubbed his head.

"Try it," she taunted.

But Miguel stood too much in awe of her to attempt it.

"See," continued Lala; "already he wakes."

Jose's eyelids were slightly trembling.

After a brief space he sighed heavily, then opened his eyes.

"You feel better?" asked the Indian woman, looking down at him.

"Yes. Is it all over?"

"There was nothing done, I only put you to sleep. Get up now."

Jose arose. To his surprise, he found that nearly all his former strength had returned.

Miguel, in an ecstasy of delight, embraced him.

"Remember," said Lala, "I told you I would cure you for twenty-four hours. Now you are a strong man; but be sure and return to me in time, else you may die at a breath."

"I dare say Duke would think it perfectly consistent if you were to start in a demonstration, Miguel jumped backward to escape her—striking his head against the half-open door with a force that brought him to his knees.

"I could strangle you!" he hissed, while he rubbed his head.

"Try it," she taunted.

But Miguel stood too much in awe of her to attempt it.

"See," continued Lala; "already he wakes."

Jose Moreno drew a knife from his breast, and felt of its keen edge.

"Miguel, you will await me here. I am on business."

"Business, captain?—and with a knife?"

"It can not be so," interrupted Jose.

"Any thing you say, captain. But the Hunchback!" his eyes widening at the sudden thought. "What if he should break out? We shall be devoured without a chance!"

"Pah!" exclaimed the crone.

"No danger," Jose assured him.

He left the room, left the house—moved rapidly along the street.

The course he pursued was in the direction of Union Park.

"If I can but find Carl Grand," he muttered, clutching his fists and scowling ominously, "I will square my account with him! He tried to kill me, eh?—tried to kill

Jose Moreno, who served him well as a tool once. Better that he had drunk of poison! He shall die!—die! I am resolved on it. So I've got the boy in hand again? I might let Carl Grand live, and yet be rich myself, if Lala can cure this curse wound—no, no, no; Carl Grand shall die!"

He soon reached the house. The broken doorway afforded him an easy entrance.

Gaining the house, he advanced, with a cat-like stealth, and grasped the bright-bladed knife hard and firm by the hilt.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 110.)

Floy's Hero.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

The stepmamma was infuriated at having her authority so completely set at naught. "You shall not go," she said, angrily. "I will look you in your room before I permit it."

Floy faced about with defiant eyes.

"Do, and I'll raise the house. Now, mamma, just listen to reason, will you? If I'm to be hedged in from all sorts of amusements, I'll break off with Duke to-morrow. Why can't you let well enough alone, while I'm contented to take him when the proper time comes?"

"I'll not be responsible for your acts another day!" cried the elder lady, in despair.

"I'll pack up and go back to town in the morning."

Floy coolly shook some essence of lavender over her costly mouroir, and left the irate mamma to put her threat into partial execution. A freak of destiny baffled her intention, and placed her under an obligation to Mr. Hoyt which she could not well ignore.

He came home from the boating excursion bearing Floy's unconscious weight, the bright hair streaming away from her pallid face, and her garments dripping with ocean brine.

The boat had sprung a leak far out from shore, and gone down despite his utmost efforts to keep it afloat. With much difficulty he had succeeded in swimming ashore with his precious burden, but Floy had fainted through fright, and for a few days following assumed the role of an interesting invalid. Mr. Hoyt was unremitting in his delicate attentions, and actually won upon the stepmamma's good graces so far as to insure kindly receptions.

One day, when she was convalescent, he surprised Floy alone upon the shaded veranda.

"Do you know," he said, "you have never thanked me for saving your life? It is very sweet to think that you owe it to me."

"I am very grateful," she returned, shyly.

"Papa will be here in another day to express his thanks—and Duke."

"Duke?"

"Duke Crayton, you know. I'm engaged to marry him," with a sigh accompanying the announcement.

The gentleman started, melo-dramatically, and turned the light of his speaking eyes upon her.

"Have I only reared bright visions to have them swept away?" he asked, sadly. "Oh, Floy, heartless, to let me love you so! How could you?"

"I am sorry," she faltered, and her blushing, tearful face challenged him to urge his case.

"Floy, sweet, will you give up the old love for me? Be mine, and such wealth and state as you have not dreamed of shall be mine. I have woed you as plain Willibert Hoyt; know me now as Count D'Arnaud. Will you be a countess, fair Floy, and reign in my castle on the sunny Gironde?"

Floy herself scarcely gave the matter a second thought. She said, "yes" in a very matter-of-fact way to a decidedly matter-of

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MR. ALBERT W. AIKEN'S Great Dramatic Romance!

We commence in next week's SATURDAY JOURNAL the long-promised story upon which is founded the author's noted drama, viz.:

ROYAL KEENE. THE CALIFORNIA DETECTIVE.

The Witches of New York. A ROMANCE OF FOUR GIRLS' LIVES.

The repeated and pressing calls for this romance has impelled the author to write it out, at this present time, when the interest in the playing dramatic version is so general; and, being a "labor of love," he has produced a story of the most intense interest.

Although, in some of its features, resembling Adele Penne's beautiful serial, "Nell, the Orange Girl"—which already has appeared in these columns—it is yet unlike it in its leading elements, only certain incidents of "The Witches," by the author's consent, having been incorporated in "The Orange Girl."

In this we have the dramatic version put into consecutive narrative form, and a most bewitching story it is. The following may be mentioned as in its character list:

The Young and Beautiful Actress, The Dashing, Light-hearted Dancing-girl, The Poor Slave of the Sewing-machine, The Heartless Fifth Avenue Belle, The Vile Hag of Water Street, The Drunken Tombs Lawyer,

The daring and reckless California Detective, The Noble Red-man from the Plains, The English Lord "doing" America, The Irish Lawyer and Politician, The Dramatic Editor of the Daily Trombone, The Wealthy Scion of an old N. Y. Abrams, the Diamond-Broker,

It is, essentially, a life revelation. The dark

vail that conceals the festering crimes of our great metropolis are rent asunder by a daring and skillful hand. From the be-diamonded inmate of the Fifth avenue palace, to the ragged wretch, who dies by inches in the damp basement of the Water street hovel, none escape the keen pen of the most daring—yet always pure—writer who has ever told the sad story of our great city's life.

It is such "romances of real life" as these that do positive good by "holding the mirror up to nature," and presenting to readers human nature unmasked. The use of fiction and the drama is so to reproduce life, men and manners that the impression shall be lasting. If certain *repulsive* phases of life are obtruded, and the impression is not one to make the hearer or reader better, it is a base use of the stage and the page. Mr. Aiken discriminates with perfect sagacity; and his plays and romances alike, while they are highly intense in dramatic action and *motif*, are yet very admirable in their mental and moral effects. His is the true "sensational"—exciting, strange, mysterious and intense, but thoroughly good and thoroughly real. It is this which has given him his pre-eminence, and which, in the future, is to make his name a household word, and give him a *lasting* recognition in all circles.

"Royal Keene" will undoubtedly be the best story of city life that Mr. Aiken has ever written, and those who have perused the "Ace of Spades," "Scarlet Hand," etc., can judge how much we are saying by this assertion.

No better proof of Mr. Aiken's popularity as a writer can be given, than the fact, that he has been offered his own price for a serial story by one of our wide-awake contemporaries; but, as the gentleman has signed a contract with us for a term of years, until that time expires he will not write for any other paper than the SATURDAY JOURNAL.

Our Arm-Chair.

Chat.—A lady of Ohio wants us to explain what we mean by the rhythm of her poem being imperfect. It is not in the power of a paragraph to answer, but the very query betrays her ignorance of the first laws of rhythmic composition. Refer to any grammar of composition and there you will find all necessary rules and instruction. It is a singular fact that large numbers of persons writing verse for the press are not familiar with the laws and construction of poetry. Guided solely "by the ear," they sometimes write very musical lines, but are quite as apt to violate all canons of correct expression. No person should essay poetic composition until he or she has at least a passing knowledge of rhythmic essentials.

The tendency of young men to abandon all trades that demand hard work, and to seek such employments as permit the wearing of good clothes and comparative ease of living, is now showing its evil results, in all directions. There are ten times as many clerks, bookkeepers, salesmen, professionals, "agents," reporters, actors, men-who-live-by-their-wits, commissioners, etc., etc., as there is any need for, while the trades and the farms are scarce of workers, and foreigners are coming in, by thousands, to fill up these vacant places. The result will be that our trades will be given over to foreigners—a consumption by no means to be wished. There is, however, just this hope, namely: as necessity is the spur to action, our young men will be driven into the trades and to husbandry in order to get an honest living. Thousands come to the cities for employ, but find it so hard to get any thing to do that they return home, quite content to

think seriously of the workshop and farm; and from the change that must follow, we hope great good to result—good to the immensely-overstocked professions and commercial callings, and good to the general industry of the country by the infusion in it of a strong and true American element.

Henry F. D. C. writes to know what he shall do. Horace Greeley, he says, advises young men never to run in debt and to pay his way as he goes, but he can't go and "pay his way," etc., etc. Like a great many of Mr. Greeley's crotchets this idea of never going in debt is to be taken with a good many qualifications. The best fortunes in this country have been made by "going into debt," and, after a pretty thorough experience, we have come to the conclusion that those young men succeed best who go into debt for a farm or a business, or some good property, and then bend all their energies to paying for their purchase. So, to a hearty, hopeful young man we say—*Go in Debt*—prudently assuming no more obligation than you can, with fair luck and good health, meet. *Go in Debt*, for it will spur you on to labor that otherwise you would never do.

"Ned Hazel" writes, saying: "Allow me to speak a few words in regard to the SATURDAY JOURNAL. It is, without doubt, the best paper printed in New York city. I take three of the New York Story Papers, but your journal simply outstrips them all in the downright interest and reading value of its matter." Ned would be surprised to be called a plagiarist, but the fact that we have dozens of letters which say just the same thing, would lead to the inference either that there is a remarkable unanimity of opinion among readers, or that they have all hit upon the same idea! In either case we accept the responsibility and bow our gracious thanks.

As to what is proper in bathing (in answer to "An Invalid") we can only repeat what Dr. Hall says, viz: that many persons have lost their lives by getting chilled in the process of bathing; sometimes by going into the bath too soon after eating. No person should take any kind of bath sooner than three hours after a regular meal, and the room should show a heat of seventy-five degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer, at about five feet above the floor in the middle of the room, in order to avoid dangerous chills; persons of a feeble circulation should have the room still warmer; if there is an uncomfortable feeling of coldness to the body when it comes out of the water, the room is too cold.—*Hall's Journal of Health.*

WAITING FOR THE TRAIN.

Do you ever have to sit in a little out-of-the-way railway station for half a dozen mortal hours, waiting for the train?

I have had to undergo that infliction recently, and my earnest prayer is, that I may be spared going through it again. Added to the tedium of waiting were many other things that made me wish myself safe at home; one of which was a man with a good deal of hair on his face, and redness on his nose—that wasn't produced by the cold—and who had the audacity to take a seat by my side, and then almost flaunt in my face one of those disgusting pictorial sheets that are such ready agents of Satan. I left my seat and took a chair by the stove, wondering to myself if men—and for that matter, some women—loved to read about the deeds of the good and virtuous, as they do about the wicked and depraved.

I was roused from my reverie by hearing something sizzle on the stove. I couldn't think what it was at first, but was not kept in ignorance long. It was tobacco-juice, which some being was expectorating on the hot stove. The men must expectorate, why can't they do so into the receptacles prepared for that purpose? Don't they imagine we women have any delicate stomachs? I almost wished that the man was obliged to swallow his own tobacco, and not disgust me with it. As misery loves company, I wished that some female would come in and help me bear the trials put upon me, but none were so foolish as to venture out.

I tried to be resigned, and I do believe I should have been so had not four more men dropped in, smoking villainous clay pipes in chorus. To inhale smoke was enough punishment for all the sins I had committed. At one time I thought I should faint, and went onto the front platform for a breath of fresh air.

The cold wind and flying snow soon drove me back again, and I put down the author of "Beautiful Snow" as an unmitigated humbug, or one who hadn't seen it under the circumstances I have described.

When I returned, I inwardly prayed for patience—sure enough I needed it. I sat like a stone, looking out of the window. For these men and their tobacco there was no mercy in my heart. They little thought the vengeance I was plotting at that window—how I should expose them in this essay!

The depot master handed me a small book to read. I presented him with some peppermints for his trouble. It was a waste of the candy, for the book was not worth it. It was a medical almanac!

Ugh! I thought this would be a dreary world if we had to subsist on such literature as that, altogether. What romance can you find in the remarkable cure of neuralgia or the mumps? And what preposterous pictures, too! An angel coming straight from heaven—almost implying that patent medicines were manufactured there—and, at a mere sight of the bottle, before even the cork was withdrawn, the "young man who had been a cripple from his birth," was restored to the use of limbs. That beats all the sensation stories I ever read in the old Boston *Scanner*.

Would the cars ever come? How could I eat my luncheon with those men staring at me? I should have had to inhale a pound of smoke with every biscuit I endeavored to swallow.

The cars did come at last; and, hungry, tired, and disgusted with railway stations and tobacco, I got into the cars, fully resolving to write out a new Book of *Mary*, placing as the first name in the catalogue that of

EVE LAWLESS.

I HAVE got gymnastics very bad now. Professor Handspring says it is the worst case of gymnastics he has ever known. I work hard every afternoon and try my best to follow his directions. I read somewhere that when weary with one kind of exercise a person should change it for another. Climbing the ladder one day with my hands, I got tired when near the top, and let go so as to try something else. Falling twenty

feet or so, and striking in a sitting position, made me determine hereafter never to attempt that again. My appetite wasn't good for several days thereafter.

I am progressing finely in the art of jumping. I would never set up my claim, however, as a champion jumpist, for fear some one might come along and jump my claim.

I attempted to throw a sommersault the other day. I threw half of one and then stuck fast, when a friend very kindly stepped forward and threw the other half for me. It is hard on the neck when you only throw half a sommersault. It was well done, one was by to take the job off my hands, or I might never have gone over it.

The gymnasts in the circus who perform on the horizontal bar have always challenged my admiration, and I have greatly envied them their feats of mingled strength and agility. Whether they hung by their toes, swung by their eyebrows, held their selves straight out in the air by their little finger, or revolved around the bar, swift as a grindstone in haying time, the man on the horizontal bar has never failed to excite my warmest enthusiasm. I see, cretically determined when I joined the gymnasts to add the horizontal bar to my accomplishments at the earliest possible moment. So I hurried through the minor apparatus to get at the bar.

I partook sparingly of the dumb-bells; dined lightly off the clubs, and merely tasted the weights and pulleys, so great was my impatience to begin practice. One fatal morning I found myself the sole occupant of the gymnasium. I wanted no one to witness my first efforts at the bar (any more than a young drinker does) and here was the coveted moment.

I first thought I would try revolving rapidly around the bar, with a grand finale, in which I would stand on my head on the bar and then throw a double back sommersault to the floor. Rejecting that as rather too difficult a feat for a first attempt, I concluded to undertake the simple feat of hanging by the legs to begin with. Found that the easiest thing in the world.

Remember wondering why people don't try it often, instead of hanging by the neck, it is so much pleasanter. Regretted so much of my life had been spent without learning to hang by my legs.

Hung there long enough to get the hang of it, as you might say, and then tried to get back again. No go! I had seen how gymnasts got there, head down, but had neglected to observe how they regained their "as you were," as we say in military.

I tried to wriggle around so as to get hold of the bar with my hand, but found I

couldn't wriggle to any effect whatsoever. I had a faint impression that circus fellows

let go with their legs, and came down on

their feet, but I felt morally certain if I let go I should come down on my head and go about, all the rest of my life, with my neck in two pieces. Things were getting serious.

The blood, taking what I consider, an undue advantage of my position, was all running down into my head. The whole room was swimming. Dumb-bells were

waltzing madly with the clubs, and inverted

apparatuses of all descriptions went whirling

around in the most bewildering manner.

I felt my strength giving way, and, although there was a rule against loud talking, I yelled for succor; but there was no *sucker* there, except myself. As I felt myself

weak, I fainted away, which I would advise

my readers to do when they can't get away in any other manner. When I recovered I

was stretched on a spring-board and a couple

of gymnasts (who arrived opportunely) were fanning me with a glass of brandy and water.

The fall raised such a bump on my head that I looked like a double-header. I was

puzzled for several days to tell which was

me and which was the bunch. Used to get

the bunch shampooed, and wear my hat

on. I recovered from that, and am now taking

my exercise every day. I am so muscular

in my arms that I can bring myself up by

hand. Before I went to the gymnasium I

couldn't bring up a child—not in the way

he should go. I have practiced holding out

weights until I can hold out almost any

thing. It is a good thing to be able to hold out. How many more temperance men we

would have if, when they reform, they

could only hold out. I am deficient in bar

practice. Parallel bars confuse me, for

where there are two bars parallel to each

other, all things being equal, I am puzzled

to which to patronize.

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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

5

WEARY.

BY ST. ELM.

Ye isles that lie beneath the Southern seas,
Basking beneath the sunlight's mellow glare,
Your golden shores are decked with a light breeze,
A gem surrounded by the waves as fair.
Yet not so fair as she, thy captive maid,
Who musing stands beside the dripping flood,
Watching the crimson-tinted wavelets fade,
That erst had left behind their trail of blood.

The marble moon with white and glittering rays,
Smiles coldly down upon the slumbering wave,
Whose silver surface meets the leveled blaze.
There is no light in the sky, no light in the grave,
But ah, the light that flashes from the West,
Can ill compare with all that beauty gave.
The blue-eyed maid, within whose heaving breast,
The rosy beams of Passion softly lie.

Mid the soft languor of that April day,
The weary night came flitting slowly down,
And soon, once more, the shadows dim and gray,
Were playing softly o'er the mountains brown,
And the stars were spangled in the sky.
Was waited out beyond the pale white stars,
While the weird notes that ring across the sea,
Stole softly downward from the heavenly bars.

Cora's Failure.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"Oh, dear!"
It was uttered in the most melancholic of voices, and accompanied by such a lugubrious sigh that Mrs. Chesterton glanced up from her sewing to the pretty, clouded face at the other window.

"And what is the matter, child? You look as though you hadn't a friend in the world. Is any thing wrong, dear?"

Then Cora Chesterton's face—a rarely beautiful face it was, cherry-lipped and hazel-eyed—was turned to her mother's inquiring gaze.

"Wrong! mamma, every thing's wrong!

Show me the first glimpse of sunshine in this horrid, tedious life you and I lead, and I'll be eternally grateful!"

A grieved look flitted across Mrs. Chesterton's face; a face that bore traces of regret and great sorrows.

"I am sorry, dear, that you can find no sweetness in the sun you are obliged to drink. Life and health are, to me, very great blessings, and I appreciate them the more, I think, since your pa's death. What were you going to say, Cora?"

For Mrs. Chesterton had seen the lips move as if to frame an answer; perhaps she was somewhat surprised when the words came.

"I was going to say I fear I shall die of the blues if there is no change in this horrible dullness. Just fancy, mamma, how strange it must be for me to give no parties, and entertain so few guests! Oh! if papa had only left us as we expected!"

And Cora frowned, almost angrily.

"Child—child?" and gentle as was the repeated word, Mrs. Chesterton conveyed grave reproach in it. Then, with a sort of patient sadness, went on:

"What is there in particular you are thinking of? If I can relieve this tedium, I will do it, in any way you may suggest."

A bright smile suddenly radiated Cora's face that made her look prettier than ever; and she started from her chair in an impulse of glad delight.

"Mamma! if you only will! Oh, if I only could have a party, and wear my white grenadine!"

A little exclamation of surprise from Mrs. Chesterton preceded her answer.

"A party, Cora? Why, you know I could not think of affording such an extravagance. It would take at least a hundred dollars, and I could not spare that from our little hoard. Besides, dear, surely you are not enough acquainted?"

"Oh, yes I am, mamma. There are at least fifty people I could name who I'm sure would come."

"Rob Fenton, for instance," said Mrs. Chesterton, archly, glancing across the room.

Cora's cheeks flamed, and she tossed her head in a pretty, graceful way she had.

"Rob Fenton! indeed, I don't see why you should twit me about *him*, mamma. I've told you and him, too, over and over again, that I will not have him for a lover. He's poor, and I've had enough of poverty since poor papa died!"

Mrs. Chesterton sighed faintly at Cora's words, and glanced around the cozy room in which they sat, as if wondering if Cora called that poverty.

"The truth is, mamma"—and Cora's coaxing, sweet-toned voice dispelled the reverie she was falling into—"the truth is, mamma, I—I think if I try, I might—possibly—win—I mean that Mr. Delmayne acts as though—as if—"

And she blushed and broke down entirely.

Mrs. Chesterton had caught the name, Delmayne; was it possible that the rich, aristocratic young gentleman, the most eligible match far or near, was in love with her Cora?

Her heart bounded almost as wildly as her daughter's, at the thought. It would be so grand to have Cora do so well; then there were the Delmayne diamonds, the Delmayne plate, the Delmayne—

"So you see, mamma dear, it might be a stroke of policy if I gave such a party. Besides, I am so crazy for the opportunity it would offer me to completely snub that Lillian Maxwell—the haughty creature!"

Mrs. Chesterton had heard only part of Cora's remark, but that little convinced her of Cora's sagacity. Of course it would be a stroke of policy; who knew but what the Delmayne alliance hung on her faltering decision?

"Do say yes, mamma, and promise me a new dress, won't you? Mr. Delmayne might notice how shabby my grenadine is. He is such a connoisseur!"

And Mrs. Chesterton said "yes," and promised the new dress.

In the middle of the parlor she stood, looking very radiant as the bright glare of the gaslight fell athwart her pretty face, lighting up her eager eyes into a new beauty, and most of all, showing all the fine points of her "new dress."

Surely, Mr. Delmayne could find no fault with this; surely, if she had read admiration in his ardent eyes when she had met him in her ordinary attire, under ordinary circumstances, she was not wrong in thinking she could bring him to her feet, aided by the important adjunct of a stylish, becoming toilette.

And so Cora Chesterton let her thoughts fly on, as she scanned carefully her pale-pink crepe, with its graceful train, its stylish overskirt, its faultless *en Pompadour* waist.

Yes; to-night was the night of the party

—and her triumph, she felt almost sure. And how thoroughly she intended to play her cards well; how thoroughly she despised the comparatively humble life she led; and, more than all, over and above all, what a perfect man Lester Delmayne was! Could she love him? Ah, didn't she love him, and his money, his position, his beauty?

Surely, she might win him; surely, she would win him, and her heart bounded at the lofty flight her wild-winged imagination took.

Just then the door-bell rung, and in a flutter of nervous delight, Cora heard a gentleman's voice at the door.

"Would she step down a moment before the guests assembled? Mr. Fenton wished to—

Mr. Fenton, indeed! and why should he desire an interview? Oh, yes, she would do all of course; but he was such a bore!"

And so she sallied down into the room where he awaited; this plain-faced, grand-hearted man who made the greatest mistake—perhaps the only one—in his life, in lavishing his love on a girl so ambitious as Cora Chesterton.

To-night—he had only been invited because Mrs. Chesterton insisted upon it—he had come to see if there was a chance for him with Cora; and now, as he sat there, he heard Cora's light, rustling tread through the hall; and then he heard some one enter and accost her.

Cora's greeting—"Oh, Mr. Delmayne?" was rapturous; and the gentleman's reply was nearly as ardent.

"I had something so very important to say to you, Miss Cora. May I see Mrs. Chesterton while I wait for you? I understand you are engaged for a few minutes."

That was all Rob Fenton heard; then, all flushed and unusually gracious, the beautiful girl came into the room.

He went at once to meet her as she crossed the carpet.

"I need not detain you but a moment; I only have a word to say, and a word will answer me. I am not given to—to-flowery speeches, but I came to give you, yes, pray you, to accept it. Cora, do you?"

He was not so plain as she thought, with that quiet eloquence in his eyes, that splendored in his manner.

For a moment—only one moment, Cora wondered if it would not be better—pushed this against the Delmayne money, the Delmayne grandeur? And was there not more than a chance that it was already elected to her? What had Lester Delmayne meant by that he wanted of her? why had he such a favor to crave of her mother?

Then she bowed, very politely, and Cora, behind Hester said: "You can take that, too, while you are about it."

The girl turned quickly, and was face to face with Rupert Gaspard!

Scarce knowing what she was doing Hester rushed into the outstretched arms as into a refuge, with tears of gratitude in her eyes at this opportune deliverance. He folded her to his bosom for an instant only, and then, turning to the hackman, who was now confronting him, he said:

"You had better move on, or I will have to turn you over to the police for attempting to rob this young lady."

Let her pay me for the ride first," replied the Jehu, meekly. "I earned that."

"You have earned a great deal more, my fellow—a term at Baton Rouge—and you may deem yourself exceedingly fortunate that you have fallen into such merciful hands."

"Then you don't intend to pay me?"

"Not a picaucy," answered Rupert, returning to Hester her pocket-book, which he had picked up from the pavement.

"And now, Miss Corwin, let us go," he added, extending his arm.

The young couple walked quickly away from the scene, while the hackman, muttering an oath, mounted his box and drove off in an opposite direction.

Of course Rupert was very much astonished at finding Hester in such a place, and when they had gone a square or two, he told her so frankly.

She was just as frank with him, relating every circumstance that had transpired at Holcombe Hall having any bearing upon the cause of her departure therefrom.

"And what do you propose doing?" he asked, when she had finished.

"Indeed, I don't know. I'm so discouraged by Rupert saying in his quick, impetuous way, and with a great deal of earnestness:

"Miss Corwin, although the duration of our acquaintanceship does not entitle me, perhaps, to the name of your friend, yet, believe me when I say, as I do now, that I would gladly do any thing in my power to serve her."

She thanked him with tears in her eyes, and he continued:

"Fate has enabled me to rescue you from the clutches of a scoundrel; will you permit me to supplement the kindness of fate, by providing you with a home during your stay in the city?"

"But, Mr. Gaspard, I've got money; I can go to a hotel," she interrupted.

"There is one serious objection to your going to a hotel," he said, "and that is: your uncle Harold will, in all probability, visit New Orleans in quest of you and, of course, he will naturally search the hotels first. Don't you think so?"

Yes, she thought so; but might he not find her out anywhere? "Besides," Hester added, "I must find employment; my money will not last long, you know."

"What do you propose doing?"

"Oh, dear me! I never thought about that," she replied. "But I can teach."

"Music?"

"Music, or painting, or French; and I think, although I never tried, I could teach children to read and write, if I couldn't get any thing else to do."

"Those are brave words, Miss Hester," said Rupert, "and speak well for your courage, but, teaching in whatever branch, is a tiresome, ill-renumerated, vexatious pursuit, and I'm afraid you would soon break down under it."

"But I must do something," she said, determinedly. "And I can't do any thing else."

"Then if you have chosen your calling already, and have quite made up your mind not to go back to Holcombe Hall, I will do all I can to assist you. As to where you will stop while in the city, I would suggest your coming to my aunt Montlea's, on St. Charles street. She will receive you kindly, I'm sure, and perhaps aid you in securing a position such as you desire."

Hester hesitated; she would much rather not intrude herself on the privacy of a family to whom she was an entire stranger, and so she said:

"Is it a nice place—a real nice place?" asked Hester, hesitatingly.

"No nicer in the whole State of Louisiana. Come on, Miss. Here's the cab. Jump in, please, and I'll take you to the St. Pierre in a jiffy."

She did as he requested, and then the driver mounted his perch, cracked his long whip, shouted to the crowd to make way for him, and the vehicle rattled over the rough planks into Canal street.

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Could she love him? Ah, didn't she love him, and his money, his position, his beauty?

A rapid drive of twenty minutes, and the hackman stopped before a large ugly building on Burgundy street. Dismounting, and helping Hester to alight, he said: "This is the place."

"She glanced up at the basket-like balcony that hung overhead, and which was filled with drying clothes; at the red muslin curtains that shrouded the lower windows, and then, turning to the hackman, she said:

"Oh, sir, I don't want to stay here. I don't like this place."

"I can't help that," he said, gruffly. "I haven't time to drive you all over town."

"But, sir," and she took out a well-filled pocket-book, "I will pay you for your trouble."

"Oh, then, that alters the case considerably," he remarked, eying the money; "you see, I'm a poor orphan, and I can't afford to lose my time, and I most always get paid in advance."

Hester was really afraid of the man; he was so coarse and brutal in appearance, and so she thought it prudent to ask him how much money he wanted.

"Ten dollars," he replied.

"Ten dollars?" she echoed. "Why, I didn't think it would be so much as that."

"Some people are unreasonable," he said; "they have an idea that horses stand you are engaged for a few minutes."

That was all Rob Fenton heard; then, all flushed and unusually gracious, the beautiful girl came into the room.

He consented to this, and Rupert, hauling a cab, they were soon deposited in front of the St. Charles Hotel—then a new structure.

They went in by a private door, and an obsequious servant showed Hester her room, at the threshold of which Rupert bade her adieu, promising to return in a few hours.

He was as good as his word—nay, better, for with him he brought Mrs. Montlea, a dark, elderly lady who, after a formal introduction to Hester, said:

"Dear, Rupert has told me all, every thing; of your lonely life; of your treatment by your uncle, and of your brave flight. And now I have come to offer you a home until such times as you choose to seek another."

Hester tried to thank her, but the words would not come fast enough, and she cried instead—cried, glad, tender tears, as well as she pressed the girl to her heart with whispered soothing words into her ear.

Hester Corwin felt happier than she had for many a day when she entered Mrs. Montlea's splendid mansion an hour after, and was welcomed to her new home by little Lotta Montlea, a child of eight years, and Mrs. Montlea's only one, her husband having died in the Indies six months before Lotta's birth.

"I'm so glad you come," said Lotta, catching Hester's hand, "because we can play together, and sing in the evening, and you can sit in our pew on Sundays with mamma and cousin Rupert. Can't you?"

"Yes, with a blush, as Rupert's name was mentioned; she could do all these things, and what was more, would do all these things with the greatest pleasure, and so Hester Corwin began a new life.

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were four sets, and among them the oblong, elliptical hoof-mark of a mule. Whoever rode these animals must have gone across the main trail before the Indians passed back; since on this the shod tracks were obliterated by the thicker trampling of the naked hoofs.

What could it mean? Had a party of white men passed the place, going in a transverse course to that pursued by the savages? And who could have been riding a mule? Hawkins could tell that this had been under a saddle, and not a pack.

The scouts rode along the side trace, first to see whence the shod horses had come, and whether they were not of the band of savage burglars.

They had not far to go before getting satisfied on this head. A camp-fire still smoldering; fragments of food around it, where men had eaten supper; among them some chips of biscuit, with which the red ants were already making free, transporting them to their subterranean cells.

Indians do not eat biscuit, because they have it not. The faces of the men who bivouacked by that smoldering fire must have shown white while it was blazing.

There were other signs, though not so distinctive of race. The long grass pressed down, where men had lain as in sleep. Near by the branches of the trees with the bark chafed, where ropes had been knotted around them. Underneath, the ground dented by the stamping of horses.

The trackers proceeded some way beyond the camp. They found that four horses and a mule had entered it; that they had come up the river by the same route as that, a few days before, traveled by Colonel Armstrong and his colonists; that they had not gone quite as far up as the crossing-place, but, before reaching it, had turned short off toward the bank, and passed the night in the camp recently deserted.

Here, again, the scouts could distinguish the tracks of four horses, all shod, all American, with those of a mule, also American—the hybrid of the States leaving a hoof-print easily distinguishable from that of its Mexican congener.

In addition, they saw the tracks of a dog—a large dog—evidently in companionship with the party of horsemen.

Satisfied that these must have come up the river bottom, and were in no way connected with the Indians, Hawkins and his party returned to the ford road; and, crossing this, entered the track on its opposite side.

It brought them under the great oak, and in sight of "sign," which caused them to pull up, dismount, and give it keen scrutiny.

They had not been long so engaged when one who had entered the palmetto-bushes uttered an exclamation that attracted the rest toward him. It was accompanied by the words:

"Boys! here's the dead body o' an Indian!"

They all rushed to the spot, and bent over the form of what they supposed to be a savage. They could see he was dead, and what had caused his death.

A wound in the breast, from which the blood had but ceased flowing—a gash between two of his ribs over the region of the heart.

One stooped down and ripped open the buck-skin shirt saturated with gore. He started back with surprise, as did the others, on seeing the skin underneath. It was not red; it was not that of an Indian! The man who lay dead among the palmettos was white! Yet in savage garb, with a horsehair wig upon his head stuck full of feathers; his face and hands bemarred with red paint, but the rest of his body of that color boasted by the race calling itself Caucasian.

Mystery of mysteries! What could it mean?

While they were endeavoring to solve the enigma, another cry claimed their attention.

A second searcher had found something else under the far-spread branches of the live oak. He had picked up two things, of themselves simple enough, but in that spot significant. One was an orange-blossom. The first was crushed, as if it had received rough handling; the second might have had the same without showing it.

There was no cypress seen growing near, and certainly no orange-tree. They could think of only one place where the flower could have been plucked—the old Mission garden.

Who plucked it? Who had brought it thither?

Now, it was remembered that the last place where Colonel Armstrong's daughters had been seen was in the Mission garden, or going toward it. Who but they had gathered orange blossoms? And who but they could have brought them thither?

But how came they under the oak? The tracks showed that the Indians, after crossing the river, had gone straight on toward the bluffs on the other side of the valley. Who were these that had turned up-stream? What was he lying dead among the palmettos? Why had he been killed? Who gave him that terrible stab, that must have instantly put an end to his existence?

The trackers were in a quandary—awed as well as mystified! No wonder, with such traces around them, sanguinary as strange!

For a time they stood unresolved, not knowing how to act.

Hawkins put an end to their hesitation, saying:

"You, Cris Tucker, go back 'cross the ford, and straight up to the Mission. Ride fast as your horse can take you. Tell Colonel Armstrong what we've done, and what we've seen. Tell him about the trail o' shod horses, that appear to have gone up the river this side. Say, we've taken after, and are going to follow them far as their trail leads. There's only five of them, so we needn't be afraid. Tell the colonel not to despair, but get all the boys ready and keep by the building till we come. An', Cris, just to comfort the old gentleman, tell him that maybe we'll bring back the dear girls along wi' us."

"I'll do all ye say," was the simple response of the young hunter.

At which the two parted—Tucker riding back, and soon after plunging across the ford; while Hawkins, at the head of the scouting party, continued on up-stream on the trail of the shod horses.

CHAPTER LXXX.

RESTORED.

Though riding in all haste, it was near mid-day when Cris Tucker came in sight of the Mission building, bearing the report

sent by the scouts. The time consumed by them in scrutinizing the cross-trails had thus delayed him.

The colonists, who anxiously awaited their return, desiring a single horseman afar off, were thrown into a fresh state of excitement and alarm.

It did not tranquillize them to identify the horseman as Cris Tucker; which they did long before he was within speaking-distance. He was alone, spurring his horse a mule? Hawkins could tell that this had been under a saddle, and not a pack.

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It brought them under the great oak, and in sight of "sign," which caused them to pull up, dismount, and give it keen scrutiny.

Then arose the inquiry, what they were to do.

It was answered by Tucker imparting the advice of which he was the bearer.

Coming from Hawkins, their guide and hunter, in whom they had confidence, and indorsed by Dupre, by most looked up to as the real leader of the colony, it was sufficient to decide them.

Tucker, dismounting, and coming face to face with Colonel Armstrong, gave a detailed account of what the scouting-party had seen and done; not forgetting to add the hopeful words with which Hawkins had intrusted him.

The scout's report was like a sudden burst through skies long darkened.

Faces became brightened around him; even that of the old soldier showing a faint ray of cheerfulness.

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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

7

proved how much riches are really worth!" said the lady, mournfully.

"But you have something more to lose, as you said—there will be humiliation in your relinquishment."

"Not to me! I did not mean that."

"To you, if to any one."

"No—not to me, or my daughter, in the mere loss of a fortune! A blessed release, perhaps, from one who has persecuted us both. But I shall be condemned for the delay; and you stand high in the world's opinion, Mr. Duclos; you have nothing to blush for in the past; it would not be safe to let you share our abasement. My daughter shall bring no reproach to her husband!"

"Again I ask, what reproach could be cast upon her, or you, madam?"

"The world is not just. It is cruel to the fallen. We shall be treated with undeserved aspersions; I have made up my mind to encounter them."

"And I have resolved—if aspersions come, to share them with you. I will not give up Oriel."

"Frank!" said the weeping girl, lifting her head from her mother's shoulder, and looking with her soft brown eyes into his, "let it be as mamma says—for some time; till all the scandal is over." Then, if you like, you can visit us."

"And leave you alone to bear the blow in its first force! Oriel, for what do you take me? And you, madam—let me assure you I will not leave this room, till you have promised that you will not interfere between us!"

With gentle but resistless force, he drew the young girl from her mother's embrace, close to his own heart, folding her to greet her preserver.

Madeleine swept the tears from her eyes.

"I can not—I dare not!" she exclaimed.

"May Heaven bless you, my children!"

The silence of deep emotion was uninterrupted for some minutes.

"Now you will call me Frank again, mother!" said the young man, smiling. "I shall be your son in reality, before this is publicly known. That is decided. What do you now propose to do?"

"To return these papers," answered Madeleine. "But first, Oriel, come to my dressing-room. We must change our dresses. These are not fit for walking in."

"Why not go in the carriage?" suggested Frank. "Though the distance is not great."

"I shall never set foot in the carriage again. It does not belong to me. Come, my child."

Taking Oriel by the hand, she led her up the stairs.

In a few moments each of them had put on a plain dark walking-dress. That of the mother was a fine brown cassimere, gored and full at the bottom of the skirt, with only a narrow flounce for trimming. The sleeves were tight fitting, and cuffs of snowy linen finished them at the wrists, with a collar to match at the throat. A watch-chain of jet and gold, and brooch to correspond, were the only ornaments.

Oriel's dress was a dark green silk, thick and soft in texture, and also fitting closely her slender and exquisite form. Her collar and cuffs were small and of the finest French work on linen. Her hair was put back from her forehead, the curls confined behind by a green ribbon.

This equipped, the two ladies joined Frank in the drawing-room. Under a small riding-hat with black net vail thrown back, her golden-auburn hair rippling from her temples, and escaping in a stray ringlet here and there, Madeleine's face, flushed with the energy of her purpose, might have been taken for that of a young girl rather than that of a matron approaching middle age. She was still, however, on the sunny side of that, and her beauty in its maturity exceeded the budding loveliness of her youth. Her form, luxuriant in its proportions, and of commanding majesty, was absolutely faultless. Her clear blue eyes and transparent complexion made her look like Oriel's sister rather than her mother.

Little was said by either of the party till they reached the house of Sanders.

He was within, seated at one side of the fire, in an arm-chair, leaning his forehead on his hand, apparently in deep thought. His dress was the rough but neat suit he was in the habit of wearing when not occupied in the stables. The other hung against the wall in one corner, ready for use, with his overcoat and cap.

At the end of the room George Miles was tuning his organ, the monkey capering about, and perching, in the intervals of his sport, on his master's shoulder.

The light tap on the door aroused the elder man. He called out, "Come in!"

Frank Duclos entered first, holding the door open for the two ladies.

Sanders rose to receive his guests, and there was much grace in his movement and attitude as he did so.

The elder lady wore her veil down. Oriel had none. Her host welcomed his late guest with a beaming smile, and a flush of pleasure.

"You are very good, my child," he said, "to remember the old man; to come and see him. Mr. Duclos promised me this pleasure—this very evening; but I scarcely expected it."

A sudden shriek interrupted him.

Madeleine had flung back her vail, and stood with wide, wild eyes gazing at the man, whose voice she had recognized. Rigid and fixed was that stony gaze; deathly white was the face, to the lips parted in amaze and affright; but she did not swoon. It seemed as if the mandate of the soul, requiring the service of every faculty to take in the strange conviction, had overcome the weakness of the shrinking frame.

The long-separated husband and wife were again face to face!

The man gazed upon her too; but with conflicting emotions. Her more than girlish beauty flooded his spirit with a sort of rapture; her instant recognition told him he was not forgotten. But mingled with this delight was his stern resolution to deny himself her sight forever; to remove himself as a stumbling-block from her path.

Why had she come to make it so hard for him to keep this determination?

Oriel and her lover saw her change of countenance, and thought her suddenly taken ill. The girl ran to her with a cry of alarm, and Frank offered to support her. She thrust them both aside hastily.

"Lewis! Lewis!" at length she was able to articulate. She rushed toward the extended arms of her early love; she would have thrown herself on his breast. But, seized by an unspeakable consciousness, she stopped short, grasped his outstretched

hands, and holding them firmly in hers, sunk on the floor at his feet.

Lewis Dorant raised her; he clasped her closely in his arms.

"My wife! my own Madeleine!" he murmured, fondly. "You still love me, Madeleine."

The bewildered woman disengaged herself from his embrace, still grasping his arms convulsively and gazing into his face.

"You did not die, Lewis!" she said, in a trembling whisper.

"No, my loved Madeleine; it was a mistake. I have been an exile—and all because I loved you."

"Oh, Lewis! you abandoned me to despair—to the life of horror I have led since!"

"If I were to blame, you must forgive me, Madeleine. We were both—Duclos and I—attacked by murderers; he was their victim, though they meant to make away with me. One of them saved me in a boat; took me to France, and 'tended me through an illness of many weeks. When my strength returned, I was weak of head, and I was easily persuaded not to show myself. I was told you had become the heiress of immense wealth, which you would forfeit if married to me; that you had already taken possession of this fortune and had assumed your uncle's name, to give wealth and comfort to our child."

Oriel and the young man had witnessed this strange scene, looking inquiringly at each other in search of its meaning. It was at this point that she comprehended it.

"Then you are my father—my own father!" she exclaimed, bounding forward to greet her preserver.

"Embrace our child, Lewis!" said her mother, in a choking voice.

The girl was clasped in her father's arms.

Young Duclos did not dare intrude on the affecting scene. He retired to a greater distance, still looking at the persons in whom he was so much interested.

George Miles crept softly up to him, leading the monkey by his string.

"I say, sir," he whispered, "I'll just step outside with the animal; it's a family matter, and don't want strangers here. If you should want us by-and-by, you'll only come to the door, and tip us the wink, and we'll be in—a twinkling!"

He moved on stealthily; presently returning to add:

"I've got a thunderin' thick stick, with such a knob! in case of accidents: people outside—you know; ladies in the case. It's allers best to be prepared, you know."

This time he and the monkey made their exit without disturbance.

Lewis Dorant proceeded with his history.

"I came in disguise, Madeleine, to hear of you," he resumed. "I stood by my father's grave, and that they had supposed to be my own. I dared not let any one know I was living, for I had resolved not to drag you back to poverty; it was not for me to place a barrier between you and happiness."

"Happiness!" echoed the wife, bitterly.

"Affluence and ease, at least; the condition to which you were born; what had I to offer in their stead? Poorer than ever, my enfeebled health denied me even the power to labor! I could not offer you a shelter!"

"I fled from the country, to avoid the temptation of disturbing you! After months had passed, I came again. It was just after your marriage—and the formal recognition of you as the mistress of Broadhurst."

"Lewis!" said Madeleine, reproachfully, "how cruelly you wronged me!"

"I knew the compact you had made with that bad man," he answered. "I knew the ceremony that passed between you was understood by both to be a mere form, enabling you to hold your inheritance; that your lives were separate; that you scorned the man, and had paid him with a share in your wealth, for which alone he had sought you. I saw you once, my wife!"

"You saw me?"

"But for a moment: you were dressed in mourning, and you looked sad; but you were happy in the growing beauty of your daughter. I saw her, too. I took her in my arms, one day when I met her walking out, and oh, how fervently I prayed Heaven to bless her!"

Oriel had told her mother of the strange man who had kissed her.

"That I resolved should be my last glimpse of her and you."

"To tore myself away. I went abroad and enlisted as a soldier. Ten years I was in service; ten years, in all which time I heard nothing of my child."

"After a severe wound—which was long in healing—I quitted the army. I could not stay abroad: I returned to England, resolved to live here in the humblest capacity, where I could watch over those dear to me. I followed you wherever you went, Madeleine. Your movements were not far. When you came to London, I established myself here, as a hackman, because from the stand within sight of your house, I could see you when you came in and out."

She was interrupted by a noise outside the door. Voices were heard, and signs of a scuffle. Persons were evidently trying to force an entrance.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 105.)

lingly give my child. Heaven give you happiness! For her mother—she will be satisfied with what my daily labor can furnish."

"Welcomen penury!" cried the wife; "reunited to you, Lewis!"

His face darkened. "Another fear disturbs me," he said. "I am not learned in the law; but the position in which my wife stands is one of danger. That bad man may take advantage of it—in revenge for losing the fortune—"

"He can do nothing!" replied Frank.

"You mean Marlit? The ceremony of marriage with him was of course null and void, while you were living."

"But he may proceed against her, nevertheless."

"How could he?"

"You know not his resources of wickedness! All this plot was contrived by him. He influenced Mr. Clermont to make a will by which he might profit to place himself in possession of all! He planned my death, that he might marry the heiress, and through her maternal love, won her consent to the scheme. It was only by an accident that your father became the victim instead of me!"

"My father!" exclaimed the young man.

"What do you know of his death?"

"Poor boy!" exclaimed Dorant, "you, too, have a duty—and the saddest of all—laid upon you, to avenge bloodshed! It was by no accident your father died that night on the coast! I had undertaken to guide him to the railway, that he might proceed to the seaport town; and he insisted on going that night. We were waylaid and attacked by assassins. While I descended to the cave for a cordial to revive your father, one of the villains fell upon him, stabbed him, and threw him off the bridge, which was afterward broken, to make it appear that he had fallen down. It was his body that was found and buried."

"And this Marlit was the murderer?"

"Not in person; he had employed two men, one of whom, believing me to be your father, brought me off in a boat. The other would have slain me for fear of discovery."

"Who was this man?" asked young Duclos, grasping Dorant's arm in his eagerness.

"Hugh Rawd was the murderer's name."

"And where on the earth can I find the miscreant?"

"He is here, in London; in the employ of Marlit. It will be easy to trace him. It was from him I tore the pocket-book containing those papers. In his flight at seeing the man he supposed he had killed, he took me for a specter, and offered little resistance."

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